



update

LIVING WELL IN OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome to the Commission's email newsletter with updates on our activities and other mental health news.



Applications close Monday for *Minding Our Mental Health* Youth Week Forum

If you are aged between 15 and 25 and live in NSW we encourage you to apply to attend the Youth Week 2014 *Minding Our Mental Health* forum. Applications are open until midnight Monday 3 March 2014. See the [NSW Youth Week website](http://www.youthweeknsw.gov.au) to enter.

The Commission is proud to partner with Youth Week in NSW to host the *Minding Our Mental Health* forum at NSW Parliament House on Tuesday 1 April 2014. The forum will launch NSW Youth Week which will run from 4 – 13 April with various activities across the State.

Forum participants will share their perspectives on mental health and wellbeing during interactive workshops and will be able to network with service providers, policy makers and peers to explore the challenges that young people face while supporting the mental health and wellbeing of friends and family.

The forum will equip our young people with the practical knowledge and confidence to support the people in their lives, and empower attendees to use their skills to facilitate new ideas in their own community.

To nominate a young person for the *Minding Our Mental Health* forum, please direct them to the NSW Youth Week website [to apply](http://www.youthweeknsw.gov.au). Places are limited, successful applicants will be advised via email by Friday 7 March 2014.

Strategic Plan

Since late 2012, we have been working intensively to develop the draft Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW. After 15 months, and having consulted with more than 2,000 people from all parts of NSW, we are now at the final stages of this process.

The Commission will provide the draft Plan to the NSW Government on 31 March 2014.

The draft Plan has a ten year horizon and will include our advice to Government on the vision, directions and concrete actions that Government must take to build a consumer-focused, world-class mental health system of which we can all be proud.

The draft Plan will set a long-term vision and propose actions that cover the first stages of delivering that vision. Further planning will be required once the first phase of reform is complete.

Additionally, the Commission will release its own report on what we have seen and heard in our consultations. This report will strongly reflect the voices of consumers, families and carers and will describe why change is needed to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the people of NSW.

Read more about the draft [Strategic Plan](#) on our website.

Events

- ❖ **Youth Mental Health Symposium**
Optimising outcomes
28 February – 1 March, Brisbane
- ❖ **TheMHS 2014**
Call for abstracts close 6 March
- ❖ **Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Forum**
5-6 March, Coffs Harbour
- ❖ **10th Annual GWS Mental Health Conference**
Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
21-22 March, Sydney
- ❖ **REELise film festival**
REELise revolution against cyberbullying
23 March, Sydney
- ❖ **Merging Minds Conference 2014**
13 May, Wagga Wagga

Your stories



Karen Hamilton

What started as a concept raised at a community forum, the REELise Film Festival has grown into a movement reaching children in more than 3,000 homes across the East Sydney community.

Festival director, Karen Hamilton hopes to create cultural change and empower young people to take action against cyber bullying through the REELise Film Festival. Initially a corporate lawyer, Karen became Festival Director of REELise after being deeply affected by a youth suicide that occurred near her home.

“By using their phones to make films and share their stories about youth issues, kids have the power to inspire change. Young people being bullied tend to feel alone. In fact only one in ten kids being cyber bullied actually tell someone about it. Through REELise we want young people to be proud of who they are, trust in themselves and know they don’t have to go through it alone. I got teary watching every competition entry but I’m able to recognise everyday how lucky I am to be surrounded by good people, and to be living in a community that is so caring.”

The REELise Film Festival will take place on Sunday 23 March 2014 at Blue Giant Park in Rose Bay, Sydney. For more information visit the [REELise website](#).

From the Commissioner



Wonderful work in our community

We are well and truly into the new year and the Commission is abuzz with activity collating all of the feedback received during our consultation process to inform the draft Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW. I would like to thank each and every one of you, be it an individual or organisation for your valuable contribution to this process. We are grateful for the openness to collaboration and that you were able to share your knowledge and experience in so many important areas. We would not be able to do our job without you.

In my role as Commissioner I also am fortunate to see the wide ranging and wonderful work that takes place across so many different communities and I am buoyed by the enthusiasm and pride taken on so many occasions in the effort to de-stigmatise mental health.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the Milk Crate Theatre *‘This House is Mine’* showing where the projects that the ensemble will work on for the year ahead are displayed. The ensemble performed a number of short pieces including a monologue from a young woman around a first episode of psychosis and a video projection on the rear wall representing what was in her mind. At the end of the showing we were able to ask questions of the 15 member ensemble. The showing was truly inspiring. I found this to be a wonderful example of artistic expression of lived experience and commend the work of Milk Crate Theatre and other similar community theatre groups. The powerful insights into lived experience and involvement in the group as part of a recovery journey are powerful. Read more on the [Milk Crate Theatre website](#).

We'd like to include stories from people with lived experience of mental illness, their carers and families in this newsletter so if you're happy to share your story please email: socialmedia@mhc.nsw.gov.au

We aim to send this newsletter out every two months, so the next issue will be out in April. Ideas for the next issue will need to be sent to us by 25 March.

John Feneley
Commissioner

News

Workplace wellbeing workshop with UK expert

In January the Commission, in association with the University of Wollongong's Australian Institute of Business Wellbeing, had the pleasure of hosting [Tony Coggins](#), Head of Mental Health Promotion at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation in the UK.

Tony presented a half-day workshop on the innovative Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA), of which he is one of the lead authors. The MWIA is an evidence based toolkit that enables a wide range of organisations and programs to identify, demonstrate and improve their impact on mental wellbeing.

Tony also led two full day workshops at the Commission which explored opportunities for leadership, collaboration and capacity building for promoting wellbeing, attended by representatives of state and local government agencies. [Read more](#)

A united approach for mental health and drug and alcohol

On Monday February 10, the NSW Mental Health Commission hosted the second in a series of Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Roundtable discussions. Over 25 people from the mental health and drug and alcohol sectors attended the event with representation from Local Health Districts, the Ministry of Health and various government and community managed organisations.

It is well known individuals who live with both mental health and substance use problems experience a more complex clinical profile than those without, and are at greater risk for a range of harms, including suicide and potentially have a 20-30 year reduced life expectancy.

The consultation generated robust conversations about reform and changes that aim to improve access to integrated mental health care and drug and alcohol support in the community. This included a focus on early intervention, supporting families and communities to be better equipped to manage mental illness and drug and alcohol use, and delivering prevention initiatives that may negate involvement with the criminal justice system.

Through our ongoing commitment to collaborate with consumers, communities and experts from both sectors, this very complex issue will remain a priority for the Commission.

Community collaboration for delivering integrated care

On Friday February 7, Commissioner Feneley and representatives from the Commission met in Coffs Harbour with the Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) team, Peter Carter (Director of Mental Health & Drug and Alcohol at the NSW Ministry of Health) and Dr Peter McGeorge (Director, Inner City Health Program Sydney). The group discussed ways to facilitate locally based reform within the public, community managed, non government and private sectors to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of the Mid North Coast community.

The group discussed the Mid North Coast LHD Mental Health Clinical Services Plan 2013-2021, which is the first of its kind for the LHD. Attendees shared exciting ideas around local partnership models and collaborations within the Coffs Harbour community. The conversation also covered areas including workforce issues, business development, IT and innovation and the value of fostering local networks and partnerships.

During the afternoon session, the Commission met with local leaders from health, housing, police, disability and other services to discuss the challenges of leading change at a local and regional level. With broad representation from government, non government and community managed organisations the group conveyed their ideas for building stronger local collaborations and working in a more integrated manner.

Commissioner Feneley said “These meetings have reinforced for me the strength of collaborative practice and management taking place in our communities.”

Living well

TOP TIPS

To help maintain mental wellbeing

Be an up-standing citizen!

The National Heart Foundation has released a series of posters as a visual cue to prompt workers to stand or move more frequently in the workplace, as well as other resources to implement workplace health programs.



Image courtesy of the [National Heart Foundation](http://www.nationalheartfoundation.org.au) website

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